

Nontraditional

*To be non traditional is to deviate from the expectations of a national or social tradition. **Unconventional** means giving a personal tweak to the conventions that make up the behavioral glue of society. **Nontraditional** behavior or attitude implies a much deeper deviation: to break with the marriage practices of your culture, if your culture involves fixed conceptions of marriage; to adopt trado-medical practices in a contemporary medical environment; or to serve duck instead of turkey at Thanksgiving, in America.*

Examples

1 Thanksgiving dinner

Several years ago I prepared Thanksgiving dinner for my family. (My son; my daughter and wife, who are African.) I decided to cook a duck, as an experiment in cuisine and tradition, but I was roundly rejected, in my effort, on the grounds that I was breaking tradition. This seemed to me an odd objection: my son is no traditionalist, and the two women are quite new to American Thanksgiving mythology. Yet so forceful is the hold of the Thanksgiving story that all three of my 'guests' were thoroughly put off by my effort, in replacing turkey by duck. They found it an insult to tradition. Was it the duck itself? Apparently not, for they ate the duck. It was the breach of expected cuisine, with all that cuisine implied, about the noble origins of the American Republic: peace, well being, burying the hatchet.

2 The Hawkeyes

In my part of Eastern Iowa the Hawkeyes, the University of Iowa Football team, have become part of (a very recent) tradition of homage. One adores the Hawkeyes, if one is from Eastern Iowa. There is no getting around it, *one adores the Hawkeyes*; you wear Herky Hawk (team mascot) emblems on your clothes and caps; you spend every Saturday afternoon following the progress of the Hawkeye football game—ideally in person, in the stadium, but if not from any point on the globe--and by tracking the Hawkeyes to Bowl Games, winter training, and in the national standings. Nontraditional for Eastern Iowa is the wearing, on Saturdays (anytime perhaps) of gear sporting the emblems of Iowa State's football team, the Cyclones. Herky Hawk will annihilate you if you do this.